



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS UPDATE

September 1 – 30 • Issue 7

Alternative Livelihoods Program (ALP) Making Progress in Afghanistan:

- **Significant declines in poppy cultivation** in principal provinces where ALP operates (Nangarhar – 96% decline, Badakhshan – 53% decline, Helmand – 10% decline).
- Rapid deployment of cash for work program in Helmand and Nangarhar that **generated over 2 million work days of paid labor and resulted in \$8.2 million in wages paid.**
- At its peak, **cash for work employment averaged 26,000 laborers daily.**
- As a result of rehabilitation work, **more than 50,000 hectares now have improved irrigation.**
- Government of Afghanistan (GOA) is moving toward **final approval of national seed and fertilizer program**, the largest GOA-led development initiative undertaken yet in Afghanistan. Program will deliver fertilizer, basic grain, and horticultural seeds to Afghan farmers in all 34 provinces, prior to next poppy planting season providing tangible incentives not to grow poppy. USAID is contributing \$20 million; UK has committed \$5 million.
- As part of the comprehensive AL program, USAID is **launching an orchard development** project that will benefit 5,000 farmers in Nangarhar/Laghman province.
- **Humanitarian assistance provided** for June flood damage in Badakhshan, includes repair of roads and irrigation system and provision of pumped irrigation water for those willing to forgo planting of poppy.
- In order to **build provincial public administration capacity**, a \$3.1 million agreement to provide both technical expertise and training to district-level councils and other provincial bodies has been signed.



“One month with ALP made three years of theory at Nangarhar University suddenly relevant.”

- Mohammad Tariq, 4th year agriculture and agronomy student participating in ALP's Intern Program

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR THE AGRICULTURAL FUTURE OF EASTERN AFGHANISTAN

In an effort to build the human resource capacity in the Eastern Region of Afghanistan, Alternative Livelihoods Program Eastern Region (ALP/E), implemented by USAID's partner Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), has been collaborating closely with universities and trade associations to train and mentor the leaders of tomorrow. One of the critical areas of concentration is the agricultural sector which has been decimated due to neglect of previous regimes and the turbulent recent history of Afghanistan.

The natural resources of the Eastern Region are plentiful; however the lack of technical outreach on basic crop production has had a devastating affect on the agricultural output. ALP/E is focused on taking concrete steps to invigorate the agriculture sector, including intensive assistance in extension services for the farmers, enabling them to learn and implement new skills. This has included an intern program with students of the Department of Agriculture at Nangarhar University, Jalalabad.



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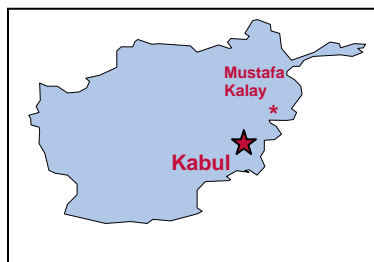
ALP IN LAGHMAN PROVINCE



Citizens of Mustafa Kalay working to protect their crop production with flood retaining walls.



The completed cement wall is the backbone of the 400 meters designed by ALP/E engineers that will divert water away from the fertile soil towards the mountains.



In the village of Mustafa Kalay in Ali Shang District, Laghman Province, the low lying valley of the community is frequently washed out causing extensive damage to cropland.

The village shuras along with the local citizens expressed their concerns to USAID's Alternative Livelihoods Program Eastern Region (ALP/E) during initial site visits in May 2005. The willingness of local citizens to participate in ALP/E's cash for work program provided the opportunity to bolster local economic development and improve the lives of the farmers in the area. With implementing partner Relief International (RI), ALP/E conducted a survey of the affected area and determined that 400 meters of flood retention walls would enable the valley to resist the impact of flooding.

On June 05, 2005, the project was initiated with the cooperation of local officials and citizen workers. Gabion walls were built at strategic locations, and a concrete wall was placed in the most vulnerable area, to allow continued irrigation of the land while diverting excess water during flooding away from the planted crops. The final stone was put in place on August 31, 2005, with the help of the more than 280 citizens per day who were employed during the life of the project.

As a result of this activity, ALP/E has stimulated the economy in the village and allowed citizens to take an active role in the management of their land. Mustafa Kalay traditionally produces wheat, corn, cotton, beans and rice for subsistence, however the village shura is discussing the possibility of cultivating commercial, market oriented crops with ALP/E, in an effort to reach markets in the region. In appreciation for the assistance provided by USAID, the village has promised to prohibit the growth of poppy in and around its borders.

"This is the first time where the community worked together on a project for the benefit of everyone. I hope we can work on other projects with ALP/E that will provide jobs and improve the future for our children."

- Gul Mohammed, a resident of the village